

EMILE ZOLA: BLOOD, SEX & MONEY

# MONEY

## **Episode 9: Darkness**

By Dan Rebellato

Adapted from

**Dr Pascal**

By Émile Zola

**Sixth Draft** (11 August 2016)

Il faut savoir, savoir quand même,  
et ne rien cacher, et tout confesser  
des choses et des êtres  
**Le Docteur Pascal**

We have to know and know regardless,  
hide nothing, and make everything  
and everyone speak.  
**Dr Pascal**

Characters

AUNT DIDI  
PASCAL ROUGON  
FÉLICITÉ ROUGON  
CLOTILDE MACQUART  
ANTOINE MACQUART  
MAYOR  
GRANDGUILLOT  
MAXIME'S BUTLER

The story takes place in Plassans, August 1871.

1.

DIDI (VO)

In every heart there is a little darkness.  
Under the ribs, wet and beating, a shadow  
in the blood. There is in mine.

In my family's hearts the dark runs very  
deep, until at times there is more  
darkness than heart.

Now their darkness seeps through France,  
casting all in shade. The Rougon night is  
filled with greed and lust and ruin and  
war.

You become accustomed to it. You start to  
make out shapes in the shadows; but then  
you see it, something impenetrable, a  
night within the night.

This is the story of that darker night. I  
don't expect it to be believed. Because  
the best place for the dark to hide is the  
dark.

Change of tone.

But first let us go into the light.

2.

Urgent music, enormous speed. A corridor  
into a hall. DIDI being pushed fast in a  
squeaky wheelchair.

DIDI

What are you doing?

PASCAL

I'm going to get you out of here, grandma.

DIDI

But where are we going?

PASCAL

Out!

DIDI

Can you do that?

PASCAL

Just watch me. Feet out!

They bang through a set of doors into  
an entrance hall.

NURSE

(distant) Sir?

PASCAL            (calling) Nothing to worry about. All routine!

NURSE            (distant) Sir! You can't just –

PASCAL            (calling, airily) Trust me, I'm a doctor!

DIDI laughs. Another door bangs open and:

3.

They're outside. Still going, bumping along.

PASCAL            I told you I'd get you out.

DIDI                Did you?

PASCAL            Didi! I left you a note.

DIDI                What note?

PASCAL            It said I'm watching you.

DIDI                I thought that was a threat!

PASCAL            A threat? But I left you food too.

DIDI                I thought that was poisoned!

PASCAL            Why would I poison you?

DIDI                I didn't know it was you!

PASCAL            But I left a note!

DIDI                Pascal, I don't wish to be ungrateful, but next time you spring me from a madhouse, tell me what you're doing.

PASCAL            Noted, grandma.

Running footsteps.

Time to go, I think! Are you alright in my carriage?

Crack of the whip and the carriage  
picks up speed.

DIDI (VO) **Confined to a madhouse by my son; freed  
from the madhouse by my grandson. Isn't  
family wonderful?**

NURSE (fading) Sir? Sir! She can't just leave!  
This is France! There is paperwork! Where  
are you taking her? Where are you going?

DIDI (head out of a window) Yes, where are we  
going?

PASCAL Home!

DIDI (VO) **And the feeling, oh the feeling, the sun  
on my face after twenty years. I felt at  
the moment I might die content to have  
felt such sun.**

**But if I thought that, I was very, very  
wrong.**

4.

The Cathedral of Saint Saturnin. An  
organist is practising. There is no  
service in progress but several of the  
faithful are in the pews, praying or  
contemplating.

PASCAL (calling, loudly) Clotilde! Clotilde!

The organist stops.

Whoops. Sorry!

DIDI (VO) **My rescuer is my grandson, Pascal Rougon.  
A country doctor, back from treating the  
wounded on the frontline, he lives in  
bachelor contentment with his ward  
Clotilde. Here she is, look.**

CLOTILDE Uncle! This is a house of God!

PASCAL Yes. What? Oh yes, sorry. Look. I need a  
favour. Could you do my rounds for me this  
afternoon?

The organist resumes.

CLOTILDE I can do, why what are you doing?

PASCAL Just – a thing came – doesn't matter – can you do them?

CLOTILDE Yes, of course.

PASCAL Oh and you might want to look in on Antoine.

CLOTILDE Do I have to?

PASCAL It would be nice.

CLOTILDE His house smells.

PASCAL All the more reason to visit. Open a few windows.

The organist restarts something.

Is this a hymn? Sounds a bit modern.

CLOTILDE He's practising.

PASCAL Ah.

CLOTILDE You should come to church, Uncle.

PASCAL (leaving, over his shoulder, out loud) No thank you. Not my thing.

Someone shushes him.

Sorry! (whispers) See you later!

CLOTILDE (murmured, close) Mary, Mother of Our Lord, I pray for the soul of Pascal Rougon, may he come to see the light of salvation.

**DIDI (VO) Not much chance of that, Clotilde.**

From church organ to domestic quiet.

5.

PASCAL's study.

PASCAL Here we are!

DIDI                   What is this?

PASCAL                It's my study.

DIDI                   You don't expect me to sleep here!

PASCAL                Oh it's not so bad.

DIDI                   But what are all these books and papers?

PASCAL                A project I'm working on.

DIDI                   I thought you were a doctor -

PASCAL                I am a doctor. This is a hobby.

DIDI                   What are those charts?

PASCAL                I'm writing a book about human heredity.

DIDI                   Oh.

PASCAL                I know it sounds a bit dry but it's actually very interesting: the science of how our own personality and the details of our behaviour and attitudes derive from our parents and their parents and so on -

DIDI                   Pascal, dear boy, I'm sure that's absolutely fascinating to you, but it isn't to me, and it's certainly not why I brought you here.

PASCAL                Oh.

DIDI                   I'll get straight to the point:

PASCAL                (Hey, I brought you here -)

DIDI                   Félicité Rougon.

Beat.

PASCAL                My mother?

DIDI                   How many Félicité Rougons do you know? Yes of course your mother.

PASCAL                What about her?

DIDI                   How are we going to stop her?



PASCAL                   How are we what?

DIDI                     How are we going to stop her?

PASCAL                   Stop her from what?

DIDI                     The merger, for one thing.

PASCAL                   (vaguely) Right.

Beat.

DIDI                     Are you telling me you don't know about the merger? The family business?

PASCAL                   I don't care about family gossip.

DIDI                     Well let me put it as plainly as I can.

PASCAL                   Righto.

DIDI                     If this deal goes through, Pascal, they'll be able to whitewash all the Rougon family's crimes.

PASCAL                   Grandma, I feel like I'm missing a step here. What crimes?

DIDI                     You must know.

PASCAL                   I don't.

DIDI                     How can you not?

PASCAL                   What is there to know?

DIDI                     How long have you got?

PASCAL                   Just tell me.

DIDI (VO)                **And I start talking. And I keep talking. I tell him about Pierre and Félicité and and how they came to power by theft and murder. I tell him about Antoine and poor Miette and the flag and Silvere shot against my own garden wall. And Pascal listens politely and then he listens with surprise and then he listens hard, pulling a notebook towards him and making notes. And I tell him about mad François killing the priest and Lisa and her treachery and**

**Gervaise and her drinking and Eugène and his strategems and before you know it, two hours have gone past.**

DIDI I'll tell you more tomorrow.

PASCAL Please. Go on.

DIDI I'm hungry!

PASCAL I'll get Clotilde to make us something to eat.

DIDI Clotilde is your niece.

PASCAL Yes. Well no. She calls me Uncle, but she's really a distant cousin. I took her in a few years ago, trying to train her up.

DIDI A cousin?

PASCAL Her father is Jean Macquart, though I don't think he even knows about her.

DIDI Well well. A Rougon and a Macquart under one roof. That rarely goes well.

PASCAL Honestly, I would trust her with my life.

DIDI All the same, watch her, Pascal.

6.

ANTOINE's cottage.

DIDI (VO) **In fact, let's all watch her. Right now, she's paying a visit to Antoine: Antoine is my son and her grandfather.**

CLOTILDE Say aah!

ANTOINE Aah!

CLOTILDE (reacts to his breath)

ANTOINE Something up?

CLOTILDE Antoine, have you been drinking?

DIDI (VO) **He is a drunkard and a scoundrel.**

ANTOINE I take the occasional brandy for medicinal purposes.

DIDI (VO) **But what can I say? I like him!**

CLOTILDE Would you unbutton your shirt please.

ANTOINE What for?

CLOTILDE I want to listen to your heart.

He unbuttons his shirt as Clotilde gets a stethoscope from PASCAL's doctor's bag.

ANTOINE It's not my heart you should worry about.

CLOTILDE What do you mean?

ANTOINE What about Pascal's? Word is it might get stolen away.

CLOTILDE What nonsense.

ANTOINE Oh haven't you heard? Mr Bouton says your Dr Pascal was seen earlier today – with a woman!

DIDI (VO) **That's me, of course. 104-year-old Didi, but neither of them know that.**

CLOTILDE Deep breath please.

ANTOINE (takes a deep breath)

CLOTILDE And out again.

ANTOINE (outbreath)

DIDI (VO) **This is Antoine's heart.**

We hear, as if through a stethoscope, the slow beating of a powerful old heart.

**And this is Clotilde's.**

We hear a nervous young heart beating fast.

ANTOINE Didn't know that, did yer?

CLOTILDE I wish people wouldn't waste their time in gossip. I'm sure there's no truth in it.

ANTOINE (insinuating) You hope there's no truth in it, more like.

CLOTILDE I don't know what you mean.

ANTOINE I'm just pulling yer leg.

DIDI (VO) **No he's not, Clotilde. He's seen something in you.**

CLOTILDE Anyway, everything seems to be in order, considering...

ANTOINE Strong as an ox, always have been.

7.

The landing outside PASCAL's study.

DIDI (VO) **All the way home, Clotilde worries about Pascal's mystery woman without knowing quite why. By the time she walks through the door, she's decided to confront the Doctor about it. So she does this.**

Knock on the door.

PASCAL (inside) Just a moment.

DIDI (VO) **Clotilde listens, puzzled. She thinks she can hear two voices inside. There are secrets in Pascal's study, she thinks.**

The door opens, PASCAL emerges, pulling the door to, behind him.

PASCAL So, what can I do for you?

CLOTILDE I just thought I'd tell you how the rounds went this afternoon. Mr Augère has a cough, but it's not serious so I just gave him the sugar tablets. Florence, the butcher's wife -

PASCAL Actually, Clotilde, would you mind if we do this tomorrow morning? I'm rather busy.

CLOTILDE Busy?

PASCAL           A bit.

CLOTILDE         What are you doing in there?

PASCAL           Nothing.

He closes the door behind him.

CLOTILDE         You can talk to me, you know. I'm not a child.

PASCAL           I know that, Clotilde –

CLOTILDE         Antoine said you were seen earlier today.

PASCAL           And what of it?

CLOTILDE         With a woman.

PASCAL           With a woman eh?

CLOTILDE         That's right.

PASCAL           Oh very well.

He opens the door wide.

Clotilde, may I present the mystery woman.

We hear the creaking of a wheelchair as DIDI makes her way to the door.

CLOTILDE         Aunt Didi?

PASCAL           That's right.

CLOTILDE         What is she doing here?

DIDI              Charming!

PASCAL           We're writing a book.

CLOTILDE         Are you?

DIDI              I don't know. Are we?

PASCAL           Yes, we are.

CLOTILDE         What sort of book?

DIDI              Yes, what sort of book?

PASCAL           It's about human heredity.

CLOTILDE        Oh, that.

PASCAL           Yes, that. You know I've been reading about it, thinking about it for years, as long as you've known me, longer.

CLOTILDE        What's she got to do with it?

DIDI             Yes, what's 'she' got to do with it?

PASCAL           I've developed my own theory, trying to reconcile the rival approaches, but until this afternoon I didn't have a subject, a case study. With Didi's help, I'm going to write a book about our family, lay everything bare, all the stories, all the secrets, but – and this is the important thing – I'm going to explain it all.

CLOTILDE        I don't understand.

PASCAL           The Rougons, the Macquart, everyone. I'm going to show how all the terrible things our family has done – and the good things too – are driven by heredity.

CLOTILDE        Based on what ... she... tells you?

PASCAL           That's right.

CLOTILDE        (whispers to PASCAL) But isn't she... mad?

PASCAL           No she isn't.

CLOTILDE        No offence.

DIDI             None taken.

CLOTILDE        (hisses) And a sinner.

PASCAL           Clotilde, what nonsense.

DIDI             Well, actually...

CLOTILDE        So, you're going to publish all the family secrets for the world to see?

PASCAL           I am.

CLOTILDE           Why?

PASCAL             For the sake of science.

CLOTILDE           Who'd publish a book like that?

PASCAL             I will. You know Mr Grandguillot has made some investments for me; I can cash those in and fund the thing myself. It's happening, Clotilde.

DIDI (VO)           **Watch her, Pascal. Watch her.**

CLOTILDE           I can see your mind is made up. I'd better go and make dinner.

PASCAL             We'll be three at table obviously.

CLOTILDE           (unfriendly) Obviously.

DIDI                Goodbye, Clotilde.

She goes downstairs.

PASCAL             Sorry to spring that on you.

DIDI                I think it's is a wonderful idea.

PASCAL             How did I not know these stories?

DIDI                Because you didn't listen.

PASCAL             My own family.

DIDI                I'm sorry.

8.

A large garden. A rural idyll.

DIDI (VO)           **I'm not sorry. These are stories I have told over and over. When no one else would listen, I told them to myself, again and again, in my cell in Les Tuilettes. To tell them, for the first time, to another soul was like the bursting of a heavy sky.**

Distant crack of thunder.

**In her garden, on the other side of Plassans, the better side, Félicité Rougon**

receives an urgent message from the Director of Les Tulettes telling her of my departure and she experiences a sudden feeling of danger, as if a dark secret has been discovered, as though a heavy cloud of secrets has begun slowly to rain.

Distantly, it begins to rain.  
Thunder.

9.

Pascal's living room.

DIDI (VO)           **And the next day she presents herself in Pascal's front room, where her suspicions are confirmed.**

DIDI                   Hello, Félicité.

FÉLICITÉ             You!

PASCAL                I thought you'd be surprised.

FÉLICITÉ             So it's true. You're out of Les Tulettes.

DIDI                   So it would seem.

FÉLICITÉ             How is she out of Les Tulettes, darling?

PASCAL                I took her out.

FÉLICITÉ             But how fascinating that you should have decided to do that, darling, when she was so happy there.

DIDI                   Hah.

FÉLICITÉ             Are you sure she'd not better off being looked after by trained medical personnel?

PASCAL                I am trained medical personnel, mummy.

FÉLICITÉ             And how long will she be here before you send her back?

PASCAL                She's not going back.

FÉLICITÉ             How thrilling.

DIDI                   Isn't it?



FÉLICITÉ But what about your heart? He has a very weak heart, you know.

PASCAL (firmly) My heart is quite alright, mummy.

Pause.

FÉLICITÉ Well. (mock-mock-sternly) Just make sure you don't get up to any mischief!  
(chuckles)

DIDI (mock-mock-playfully) Oh surely just a little. (chuckles)

FÉLICITÉ (mock-mock-finger-waggingly) Now now, we don't want you causing trouble, do we?  
(chuckles)

DIDI (mock-innocent) But what trouble could I cause?

FÉLICITÉ Well, how thrilling.

DIDI Yes.

FÉLICITÉ I'm on my way to see the Mayor; you may know that they're renaming the town square in honour of your father and me.

DIDI Yes, I did hear something.

FÉLICITÉ Did you? Well I suppose nothing remains secret for long in Plassans. Well, I won't keep you any longer. (going) How thrilling.

DIDI (VO) **Round one to harmless old Aunt Didi, I think. But Félicité Rougon is not a woman to stay down long.**

10.

The Cathedral of Saint Saturnin. An organist is practising again. We're in a pew. CLOTILDE is kneeling, reciting catechism under her breath. We hear FÉLICITÉ sit down beside her.

FÉLICITÉ (whispers) Clotilde! Fancy meeting you here.

CLOTILDE (startled) Oh! Hello, Mrs Rougon.  
Sits back up.

FÉLICITÉ What a bit of luck running into you.

CLOTILDE Oh yes?

FÉLICITÉ I had a letter from my grandson, Maxime.

CLOTILDE Oh, yes. How is he?

FÉLICITÉ Oh he gets by. The doctors are doing what they can.

CLOTILDE I'm glad to hear that.

FÉLICITÉ It seems his problems are mainly in the (mouths the words) 'downstairs department' but he's getting the best treatment available.

CLOTILDE Good.

FÉLICITÉ He's not so enamoured with his nurses, however. Convinced they're stealing from him. You wouldn't consider looking after him?

CLOTILDE Like I've said: if it's urgent and he writes to me, of course I will go to him, but until then I think he should be under specialist care.

FÉLICITÉ I'm really thinking of you. Young girl plonked out here in the sticks. Paris is the place to be.

CLOTILDE I'm very happy working with Dr Pascal, but thank you.

FÉLICITÉ And your new guest, of course.

CLOTILDE (thrown) What? Oh – you heard?

FÉLICITÉ Yes, I popped my head round the door this morning to say hello. You must be thrilled.

CLOTILDE (unsmiling) Yes.

FÉLICITÉ Wicked woman like that, still, I'm sure Pascal knows what he's doing.

CLOTILDE ... yes.

FÉLICITÉ I hope so, anyway. She's not a good influence, in my view, though God knows I don't judge.

CLOTILDE I admit I don't understand why she wouldn't be better off at Les Tulettes.

FÉLICITÉ Nor I, darling, but you know Pascal: stubborn.

CLOTILDE The house is barely big enough for two, let alone three.

FÉLICITÉ And the income of a country doctor is hardly suited to supporting another.

CLOTILDE And now this book.

FÉLICITÉ Yes! (beat) What?

CLOTILDE Oh — I assumed they'd told you.

FÉLICITÉ Yes... they did. The book, yes.

CLOTILDE I don't know what Pascal is thinking. Exposing all the family secrets in black and white?

FÉLICITÉ He's what, darling?

CLOTILDE And how can we trust what Didi says anyway?

FÉLICITÉ Did you say: all the family secrets?

CLOTILDE Yes, and all for the sake of science, apparently.

FÉLICITÉ So let's me see if I have this right: Didi is telling him all the family secrets and he plans to publish them in a book?

CLOTILDE Yes. I thought you knew.

FÉLICITÉ Just making sure I didn't have my wires crossed. And did he say who has offered to publish this unholy volume?

CLOTILDE He'll publish it himself; he has some savings that Mr Grandguillot has invested for him.

FÉLICITÉ Mr Grandguillot, of course.

CLOTILDE I've told him what I think but he won't listen.

FÉLICITÉ Clotilde, perhaps we would pray together.

CLOTILDE Um, yes, of course, if you'd like.

They kneel.

FÉLICITÉ Dear Lord, please lend some of your infinite wisdom to Pascal and reveal to him the the error of his ways. And bless dear Aunt Didi and forgive all her terrible sins.

CLOTILDE Amen —

FÉLICITÉ (There's a bit more.) And, Almighty God, please try to prevent this accursed book from seeing the light of day. Perhaps send one of the agents of your goodness to perhaps steal the manuscript away —

CLOTILDE Steal - ?

FÉLICITÉ To keep it safe... where it can do no harm to good Christian people. Amen.

CLOTILDE Amen.

FÉLICITÉ There. It feels so much better knowing that the situation is being watched over.

CLOTILDE Yes.

FÉLICITÉ Because really that manuscript, well, it could do untold harm to Christian people, in the wrong hands.

CLOTILDE You might be right.

FÉLICITÉ It makes me shudder to think of it.

CLOTILDE Forgive me, Mrs Rougon —

FÉLICITÉ Please, call me Félicité –

CLOTILDE Félicité – I didn't know you were a believer. I've not seen you at church before.

FÉLICITÉ Oh really, darling? I'm in here most days, praying and what have you.

CLOTILDE Oh.

FÉLICITÉ Keeping things sweet with the Man upstairs. One can't afford not to these days. Anyway, must dash. Meeting the Mayor you know.

CLOTILDE Yes, thank you, Mrs Rougon.

DIDI (VO) **Félicité's family business is in oil and a little of it runs in her veins, lubricating every negotiation.**

11.

The office of the Mayor of Plassans. (Same as in ep. 1.1)

DIDI (VO) **But not all negotiations can be greased and it is always possible to get a little sand in the mechanism.**

MAYOR Good to see you, Mrs Rougon.

FÉLICITÉ And you too, Mr Mayor.

MAYOR As you know, it has always been my ambition to have the square in front of the Town Hall named after you and your husband.

FÉLICITÉ 'Rougon Square' has a certain ring to it.

MAYOR It does indeed and let me say this is still absolutely my aim.

FÉLICITÉ Good. 'Still'?

MAYOR I am 100% on your side, Mrs Rougon. I want you to bear that in mind when I say what I have to say.

FÉLICITÉ Why am I not liking where this is going?

MAYOR While there continues to be considerable enthusiasm on the part of the Town Council for my proposal, new information has come to light.

FÉLICITÉ What new information?

MAYOR Several members of the Committee received letters. This morning.

FÉLICITÉ Letters? What sort of letters?

MAYOR Letters setting out some allegations against you and your husband.

FÉLICITÉ Allegations?

MAYOR Remember, Mrs Rougon, you have my unswerving loyalty.

FÉLICITÉ Show me these letters. I demand to see them.

MAYOR I wasn't sent one myself...

FÉLICITÉ Well, who wrote them?

DIDI (VO) **Guess who!**

MAYOR They were anonymous, Mrs Rougon.

DIDI (VO) **Just a little sand in the mechanism.**

MAYOR I'm sure the accusations will prove to be groundless, but we have decided to put plans for the renaming on hold –

FÉLICITÉ This is outrageous!

MAYOR – just while these allegations can be investigated.

FÉLICITÉ Mr Mayor, Pierre and I are in the final stage of talks on a merger of the family firm with Paradise & Baudu, a very considerable Paris retail consortium. Negotiations are at a delicate stage – any hint of a scandal could be extremely damaging.

MAYOR                    You have to understand, Mrs Rougon, I cannot override my committee.

FÉLICITÉ                Mr Mayor. Stéphane. In the civic life of Plassans over the last quarter-century there has been one golden rule.

MAYOR                    What's that?

FÉLICITÉ                (intensely) Don't make an enemy of a Rougon. Good day, Mr Mayor.

She makes quite an exit.

12.

PASCAL's study. Evening.

DIDI (VO)                **This was just my little idea. Stir things up a bit. A bit of fun. But Pascal has his own rebellion to subdue.**

CLOTILDE                Are you really going to write this book?

PASCAL                    Oh this again.

CLOTILDE                Félicité says it will hurt the family. She says it's disrespectful.

PASCAL                    Not to publish this book would be a far more serious act of disrespect.

CLOTILDE                How?

PASCAL                    Disrespect towards the truth. It would be lying.

CLOTILDE                That sounds very fine, Uncle.

PASCAL                    As a scientist, my supreme duty is to the truth. It is my life's work.

CLOTILDE                There's a difference, isn't there, between lying and keeping something to yourself?

PASCAL                    Is there?

CLOTILDE                We're not obliged to say everything that comes into our heads.

PASCAL                   The story of our family is more than a passing fancy.

CLOTILDE                 Everyone has secrets.

PASCAL                   I don't know about that. We don't, do we?

CLOTILDE                 I —

PASCAL                   I mean, do you?

CLOTILDE                 I — I don't want to talk about that.

PASCAL                   Clotilde?

CLOTILDE                 I'm going to bed.

PASCAL                   What?

CLOTILDE                 Good night.

She goes, passing DIDI in her wheelchair.

(going) Night, Didi.

PASCAL                   Clotilde?

DIDI                      What was that about?

PASCAL                   She's still not happy about the book.

DIDI                      Why not?

PASCAL                   She thinks it'll hurt the family or something.

DIDI (VO)                **Watch her, Pascal.**

DIDI                      I suppose you need to know about the next Macquart generation, I suppose.

PASCAL                   (getting out pen and notebook) Give me everything you have.

DIDI (VO)                **And I tell him. I tell him about Claude and his masterpiece and Jacques and his trains and Etienne in the mine and Nana, poor Nana, in the theatres and bedrooms of Paris. And Pascal writes, eyes shining, hungry for all this, filing each**



**bloodline, each combination, each new detail in the index system of his mind.**

DIDI You know, you should speak to Antoine. He has all the dirt on the early years.

PASCAL Of course. Super!

DIDI Pascal, you don't seem to worry about any of this.

PASCAL What do you mean?

DIDI What if Clotilde is right? If it does hurt the family – it might hurt you too.

PASCAL No one can object to the truth, grandma.

DIDI (VO) **Oh Pascal. You think the world is a good place, but danger is everywhere.**

13.

GRANDGUILLOT's home.

DIDI (VO) **Starting early the next morning at the home of the accountant, Mr Grandguillot.**

GRANDGUILLOT Mrs Rougon, to what do I owe this pleasure?

FÉLICITÉ Mr Grandguillot, I understand you act for my son, Pascal, in the matter of his personal finances.

GRANDGUILLOT I handle his savings and investments, yes. I trust he is happy with my services.

FÉLICITÉ Pascal is very happy. But I have a few questions.

GRANDGUILLOT Fire away.

FÉLICITÉ You'll recall a few years ago, you ran into some trouble.

GRANDGUILLOT Oh.

He goes over and closes the door.

Of course.

FÉLICITÉ            You remember?

GRANDGUILLOT      After the collapse of the Universal Bank,  
yes, I did find myself in a tight spot.

FÉLICITÉ            Yes of course, the Universal. Perhaps it  
was because of my son Aristide's  
involvement in that unfortunate episode  
that I stepped in to help you out.

GRANDGUILLOT      You were extremely helpful, Mrs Rougon,  
and I shall always be grateful to you.

FÉLICITÉ            Well you see now, Mr Grandguillot, here's  
the thing.

GRANDGUILLOT      Go on.

FÉLICITÉ            That loan, I'm calling it in.

GRANDGUILLOT      (smile fading) You're calling –

FÉLICITÉ            Calling in the loan, yes.

GRANDGUILLOT      But when?

FÉLICITÉ            Now.

GRANDGUILLOT      But, Mrs Rougon, that's quite impossible,  
I'm afraid –

FÉLICITÉ            Impossible is not a word I enjoy. You have  
until tomorrow morning or I will initiate  
bankruptcy proceedings.

GRANDGUILLOT      Mrs Rougon, I have a family...

FÉLICITÉ            Good day, Mr Grandguillot.

14.

ANTOINE'S cottage.

PASCAL              Say Aah.

ANTOINE             Not this again.

PASCAL              Now now, Antoine, doctor knows best.

ANTOINE           That girl of yours checked me not two days ago. Clean bill of health.

PASCAL            Yes and she told me you drink too much.

ANTOINE           She doesn't like to see people enjoying themselves, that's all.

PASCAL            All the same, Antoine, take it easy. Say Aah.

ANTOINE           Aah. You want to watch her.

PASCAL            Why do people keep telling me that?

ANTOINE           One of those Holier-Than-Thou types.

PASCAL            Extend your right arm.

ANTOINE           Keep your wits about you, that's all I mean.

PASCAL            And touch your nose?

ANTOINE           Looks like butter wouldn't melt but I bet she doesn't approve of you

PASCAL            And now the other arm.

ANTOINE           No, they don't like science, them religious ones.

PASCAL            Well, you seem to be fighting fit.

ANTOINE           Strong as an ox, that's me. Always have been

PASCAL            Antoine, I was thinking: maybe we could have a natter about the old days some time.

ANTOINE           Natter?

PASCAL            I'm doing a bit of digging in the family history. Be fun to hear your side of things.

ANTOINE           Always happy to help.

PASCAL            Lunch tomorrow?

ANTOINE           Why not?

PASCAL                   And we can talk afterwards.

ANTOINE                 Doing a family tree are yer?

PASCAL                   Something like that.

ANTOINE                 Quick one before you go?

PASCAL                   I should be getting back.

ANTOINE                 (pouring) Just the one.

15.

PASCAL's house.

DIDI (VO)               **But Antoine doesn't know the meaning of just the one and it is a rather unsteady Pascal who comes home later that evening to find his files and notebooks have vanished.**

PASCAL                   Oh God. Clotilde? (louder) Clotilde?

He runs from the room.

16.

He's running down the stairs.

PASCAL                   (calling) Clotilde? Where are my papers? What have you done with them?

He hits the landing and bursts open a door, calling Clotilde's name. She's not there. He opens the front door.

17.

The garden. PASCAL running.

PASCAL                   Clotilde! Clotilde!

The footsteps stop. Pause. PASCAL is very out of breath, sounding unwell.

Clotilde?

CLOTILDE            (distant) Uncle?

Beat.

PASCAL             (approaching, warily) Wh-what are you  
doing with my files?

CLOTILDE           I've been reading them.

PASCAL             Reading them?

CLOTILDE           It's your life's work you said.

PASCAL             I need to sit down. My heart - it -

CLOTILDE           Do you want to get me one of your pills?

PASCAL             It's alright, I have them here.

He takes out a pillbox, opens it and  
takes out a pill. He puts it in his  
mouth.

CLOTILDE           Here, some water.

PASCAL             Thank you.

His panting subsides.

                         How did you get them?

CLOTILDE           Uncle - the key's on a hook by the safe...  
it wasn't hard.

Pause.

PASCAL             So?

CLOTILDE           What?

PASCAL             What do you think?

CLOTILDE           It's all meanness - and greed - and murder  
- and drunkenness - and cruelty - and  
misery and sin, everywhere, sin.

PASCAL             You know I don't believe in sin, Clotilde.

CLOTILDE           Whatever you call it, is this what comes  
of science? All the worst sides of people  
exposed like this?

PASCAL                   That's not how I'd describe it.

CLOTILDE                Why not?

PASCAL                   When we are faced with the truth, we must not flinch. That's our duty. To be strong in heart and spirit and face the truth.

CLOTILDE                Easy to say.

PASCAL                   And hard to do, I know. But I would always try to accept the truth, however painful.

CLOTILDE                I wish I could believe that.

PASCAL                   Believe me, Clotilde.

CLOTILDE                I want to believe you.

Pause.

PASCAL                   Every truth discovered, every lie discarded, it all adds to the vast picture of the world that science is painting. Each bit adds a little colour here, a little detail there. And someone like me, I work in a little corner; it's not that important, really, in the long run. Take a step back and you hardly notice the detail. But when you do step back, you see the whole thing. And that's the magnificent portrait that we're working towards; a portrait of the universe from the tiniest atom to the vastest star, from a drop of blood to a solar system.

CLOTILDE                When you speak like that I worry you're trying to play God.

PASCAL                   Just look. Look out there.

CLOTILDE                At the field?

PASCAL                   At the field, at the sky, at everything.

CLOTILDE                What am I looking at –

PASCAL                   Just look and listen.

The sound of nature creep in. We hear the sound of a corn field swaying in

the breeze and this begins to sound like the earth is breathing.

Look at the corn. See the sunlight breaking over the field.

A shimmer of light shakes gold over the landscape and we hear that.

The hills in the distance, look at them.

Deep, dark satisfied rumbles.

The sky, look at its vast dark.

A huge broad celestial harmony breathes into life. All of these sounds very subtle, just edging into the soundscape.

Clotilde, you know I can never believe in your God. But this is mine. Nature, huge and heavenly and endlessly intricate and deeply satisfying and, to me, alive, as alive as the two of us.

CLOTILDE The two of us.

PASCAL Under the stars, part of the stars. All I am trying to do is make our part of it, our tiny corner as rich and full of colour and life as I can.

CLOTILDE You make it sound magical.

Let the vitalist symphony of the universe play out its magic for a moment longer.

PASCAL So can I have my notes back now?

CLOTILDE Of course. Good night, Uncle.

18.

Front room in PASCAL's home, kitchen adjoining.

DIDI (VO) **Every morning brings a new sun and a new danger. This new morning brings Antoine bearing a bottle and some unwelcome news.**

ANTOINE           Bit of a shock about Grandguillot, in't it?

CLOTILDE          What about him?

ANTOINE           Haven't you heard? He's done a runner.

PASCAL            Who has?

ANTOINE           Grandguillot. He's cleared out, scarpered, vamoosed.

PASCAL            I don't understand. He's moved away?

ANTOINE           He's done a bunk. Taken his files and fled. Course, I always knew there was something dodgy about him.

PASCAL            Where did you hear this?

ANTOINE           I stopped into a hostelry on my way, shared a drop with a few of my associates. It's all over the village.

CLOTILDE          Uncle, what are we going to do?

ANTOINE           Why? Did you have money tied up with him?

PASCAL            He handled everything, my annuity, my investments.

ANTOINE           Oh, bad business.

CLOTILDE          Are we ruined, Uncle?

PASCAL            It's not that bad. I still have my medical practice.

CLOTILDE          But you never charge anyone.

PASCAL            I may have to start.

ANTOINE           This is why I keep all my money at home, where it belongs.

CLOTILDE          Uncle – what about the book?

PASCAL            Oh let's not worry about that now.

ANTOINE           What book?



CLOTILDE            Uncle Pascal and Didi are writing a book about the Rougons and their evil deeds.

PASCAL             Evil deeds is a bit strong, Clotilde.

ANTOINE            You're doing what?

CLOTILDE           It's going to lift the lid on the whole family but now we can't afford to do it.

ANTOINE            I'll pay!

PASCAL             No, Antoine, I couldn't accept that.

ANTOINE            I'm a simple man, with simple needs. All I ask is a sip of brandy and the smile wiped off your mother's face.

PASCAL             Well it's really meant to be a contribution to science.

ANTOINE            Alright, a contribution to science ... that wipes the smile off your mother's face.

CLOTILDE           You're sure?

ANTOINE            Course I am. Come over to the cottage tomorrow and I'll give you what you need.

CLOTILDE           But that's amazing.

PASCAL             But Antoine -

ANTOINE            Yeah?

PASCAL             Tell no one.

ANTOINE            Course not.

PASCAL             These are dangerous times.

ANTOINE            You can rely on Antoine.

DIDI (VO)          **But you can't rely on Antoine. On his journey home, he stops at a bar.**

19.

Bar. ANTOINE is drunk.

ANTOINE Listen, when that book comes out, it's going to be a sensation. Trust me: this stuff is dynamite.

DIDI (VO) **And another bar.**

20.

Another bar. ANTOINE is drunker.

ANTOINE So I get my wallet out and say 'how much do you need?' Not being flash or nothing, just a humble seeker after truth, that's me.

DIDI (VO) **And another.**

21.

Another bar. ANTOINE is even drunker. We are further away, as if overhearing.

ANTOINE Plassans ain't seen nothing like it. This is a bomb waiting to go off. Believe you me: the Rougons are toast.

DIDI (VO) **Words spoken, the patter of tiny indiscretions, tiptoeing their way towards disaster.**

22.

PASCAL's study.

DIDI How can you be so naïve?

PASCAL How can you be so cynical?

DIDI Listen to me, Félicité is behind this.

PASCAL How could she be?

DIDI We need to speed up work on this book of yours.

PASCAL You don't want to rush these things.

DIDI Yes I do. How long before you can get the book out?

PASCAL Oh, a year eighteen months.

DIDI Eighteen months?

PASCAL Something like that.

DIDI Pascal, I'm 104. I can't wait eighteen months.

PASCAL A year then.

DIDI Three months.

PASCAL I don't know.

DIDI You need to act quickly.

PASCAL I'll do what I can.

DIDI (VO) **And I tell him about Ursule who hanged herself and Helene who lost her own daughter to love and François who lost his wits and Octave and his shop and Serge and his sins and again it is late when I become too tired to continue.**

PASCAL Just a little more.

DIDI We can begin again tomorrow.

PASCAL But I'm just getting started!

DIDI Tomorrow!

DIDI (VO) **So Pascal resigns himself, packs away his notebooks, and goes downstairs.**

23.

Front room.

CLOTILDE Good night, Uncle.

PASCAL (yells and then) You gave me a shock!

CLOTILDE Sorry, Uncle.

PASCAL What are you doing still up?

CLOTILDE Just thinking.

PASCAL           What about?

CLOTILDE        I'm trying to think like you. I'm trying to think that everything that happens has a rational explanation.

PASCAL           Clotilde – you're not losing your faith?

CLOTILDE        Everything rational is real and everything real is rational, isn't that what you say?

PASCAL           I don't want to change you, Clotilde.

CLOTILDE        I don't know what I find more comforting: the thought that everything is part of God's plan or that everything is part of the physical harmony of the universe.

PASCAL           Science isn't meant to be comforting.

CLOTILDE        It makes me feel small and insignificant.

PASCAL           You shouldn't feel that.

CLOTILDE        Sorry.

PASCAL           Yes, of course, you look up at the night sky and the vastness of it all, you might feel it crushing you into nothing, but remember despite it all, you are there, you are the one looking, and you can still say to the universe 'I'm here... I'm here...'

CLOTILDE        I suppose...

PASCAL           Anyway, you extraordinary, beautiful, brilliant girl. You could never be insignificant.

CLOTILDE        Do you mean that?

PASCAL           Of course I do.

Pause.

CLOTILDE        Pascal – when you said you would always rather know the truth than not know it, did you mean it?

PASCAL           Of course.

CLOTILDE            You promise?

PASCAL              Absolutely.

CLOTILDE            Because I love you.

PASCAL              I love you too, Clotilde.

CLOTILDE            No. I love you.

Pause.

PASCAL              Oh.

Pause.

CLOTILDE            I'm sorry.

PASCAL              I don't know what to say.

CLOTILDE            You don't have to say anything.

PASCAL              I've known you since you were eighteen.

CLOTILDE            I didn't want to feel this. I can't help it.

PASCAL              Well.

CLOTILDE            That's not very flattering but it's true.

PASCAL              I'm much older than you.

CLOTILDE            Like I care.

PASCAL              I'm boring.

CLOTILDE            You're not boring.

PASCAL              I'm married to my work.

CLOTILDE            That's just something people say.

PASCAL              I've stopped thinking about love.

CLOTILDE            No one stops thinking about love.

Pause.

PASCAL              But it's not a good idea, Clotilde.

CLOTILDE            Everything real is rational, Pascal.

PASCAL              You are infuriating.

CLOTILDE            I was extraordinary, beautiful and brilliant two minutes ago.

PASCAL              You are.

Beat.

                         You are.

Pause.

CLOTILDE            I don't mind if you kiss me.

PASCAL              Kiss you?

CLOTILDE            You know how, right?

PASCAL              I haven't kissed a girl for twenty years.

CLOTILDE            And I haven't kissed a boy ever. So let's make a mess of it together.

PASCAL              Well, first there are things we should discuss –

She kisses him. He relents. They kiss.

                         (murmuring) Is this right? Is this right?

CLOTILDE            (murmuring) It's real. It's real.

They kiss.

DIDI (VO)            **These are the things we know. Love can grow in the soil of the stoniest heart, in the salt water of tears, on the cliff faces of denial, in the deserts of disappointed hopes. Pascal, who only decided to live when surrounded by the dead, had taken his hopes for love, annotated them, cross-referenced them, filed them in his heart and flung the key into the lake. And now he finds the key in his hand again and his heart opening.**

PASCAL              Clotilde.

CLOTILDE

My love.

Hold the moment. Then break it:

24.

Morning. ANTOINE's cottage.

DIDI (VO)

**The next morning, Antoine has a visitor.**

FÉLICITÉ

(unconvincing) Goodness. What a dear little place.

ANTOINE

And what brings Your Ladyship down to my humble abode?

FÉLICITÉ

No need to be sarcastic, Antoine. I wanted to say hello.

ANTOINE

Hello. Now clear off.

FÉLICITÉ

Don't be like that, Antoine. I've brought you a little something.

ANTOINE

I don't need charity.

FÉLICITÉ

Hardly charity. A bottle of brandy, that's all.

ANTOINE

Brandy?

FÉLICITÉ

Look.

She produces the bottle.

ANTOINE

Why don't you sit down?

FÉLICITÉ

Thank you.

ANTOINE

You can pop your hat and scarfy thing on the hook.

FÉLICITÉ

Thank you. And such an unusual fragrance, perhaps I should open a window?

ANTOINE

And let the midges in? No thank you.

FÉLICITÉ

As you wish.

ANTOINE cuts open the seal, pulls out the cork, gives the brandy a sniff.

Ooh now that's a nice drop, that.

FÉLICITÉ I'm glad you approve.

ANTOINE Will yer join me?

FÉLICITÉ No, thank you.

ANTOINE I don't usually drink on me tod but seeing as yer being antisocial...

ANTOINE has poured himself one, takes a big sip. Exhales sharply with pleasure and smacks his lips with satisfaction.

ANTOINE Yes, that's a nice drop.

FÉLICITÉ I'm pleased you like it.

He pours another large mugful.

ANTOINE So, go on then. (takes a gulp) What's this all about?

FÉLICITÉ About? I just wanted to catch up.

ANTOINE Pull the other one.

FÉLICITÉ Do you have any news? Have you been in touch with anyone in the family?

ANTOINE I knew it! You've heard about Pascal's book, haven't yer.

He pours another large glass.

FÉLICITÉ Oh what do I care about his silly book?

ANTOINE You will when it comes out; you and your husband will be the laughing stock of Plassans. That really is a smashing drop, good choice.

FÉLICITÉ What perfect nonsense. (Thank you.) You think anyone will care about a lot of tittle-tattle?

ANTOINE You'd be surprised. Pass me the matches, will yer.



FÉLICITÉ You forget – what these?

ANTOINE Cheers.

FÉLICITÉ You forget, Antoine, I've lived in Plassans all my life. There is huge affection here for our family and what they've done.

Antoine pours another glass.

ANTOINE Plassans has long memories, Félicité. A few charitable donations and square named after yer doesn't wipe your record.

FÉLICITÉ What record? You make us sound like criminals.

ANTOINE Which is what you are! The whole lot of you!

FÉLICITÉ That's a shameful thing to say about your own brother.

DIDI (VO) **At no point did Félicité intend to kill her brother-in-law. I cannot stress that enough.**

ANTOINE (drunk) Where are me ciggies?

FÉLICITÉ They're under your chair.

DIDI (VO) **But as she sits there, working through a bottle of brandy, mocking her achievements and glorying in her downfall, murderous hatred boils in her heart.**

ANTOINE (very drunk, muttering to himself) ...old saying goes... who laughs last lasfs longster...

FÉLICITÉ What are you saying? I can't understand you.

ANTOINE (sinking into insensibility) ... songster luff laughing long...

DIDI (VO) **Félicité watches in disgust as Antoine slides out of consciousness, his body saturated in drink, a lit cigarette still hanging from his lip.**

FÉLICITÉ (whispering, cooing) Now, you disgusting wineskin. Tell me where you keep your money. Come on, Antoine, you drunken parasite. Where have you hidden it?

DIDI (VO) **Antoine, in the depths of his consciousness, seems to hear her. A laugh rattles from his lungs through his rotted cord of a throat, to his mouth.**

Unreally close, we hear a bubbling, gurgling, brandy-soaked laugh.

FÉLICITÉ Tell me. Tell Félicité. Where is the money?

DIDI (VO) **And as the laugh leaves his mouth,**

The fiery breath at the lips reignites the cigarette.

**his cigarette relinquishes hold of his lip**

The paper ripping from skin and falling.

**tumbles over his chest**

Bounce bounce bounce.

**and settles on his greasy shirt.**

We hear a slight sizzle.

FÉLICITÉ Talk to me. Tell me where -

DIDI (VO) **And she stops, because the smouldering ash has found a sympathetic affinity with Antoine's shirt. And now a small blue flame is dancing over Antoine's belly.**

The flames sizzle gently.

FÉLICITÉ Antoine?

ANTOINE mumbles in his sleep.

Antoine!

DIDI (VO) **Félicité watches, transfixed by the flames that have now caught Antoine's cardigan.**

The flames are burning more strongly now.

**Burning through his shirt to his vest, the flames catch the hairs on Antoine's chest, scorching his skin, and then his flesh, saturated with thirty years of alcohol and lethargy, begins to burn.**

Fat burning and sizzling, skin shrivelling.

**And even in the depths of drunken insensibility...**

Sound suddenly muffled. We are in Antoine's head now.

**Pain reaches Antoine.**

ANTOINE mumbles and mutters and it becomes more coherent until...

ANTOINE Wh – wh – what? F – fire – burn – Help! Help me!

The fire is now very strong, but through it we hear FÉLICITÉ.

FÉLICITÉ It's too late, Antoine. There's nothing I can do!

ANTOINE N – no! No!

DIDI (VO) **And he stands, a tower of screaming flame, his flesh sizzling, his hair shrivelling, his skin turning to charcoal, and he turns left and right in panic –**

We hear the roar of the flames as he turns each way.

ANTOINE PLEASE! FÉLICITÉ! HELP ME!

DIDI (VO) **And turning he dives towards the garden door, tearing it open.**

We hear the door opening and a gust of air which turns the burning man into a furnace. We hear unbearable screaming and he takes a couple of steps out into the garden.

**Félicité picks up her hat, fastens it with a pin and decides.**

Cut the sound.

FÉLICITÉ I think it's time to go.

Fire, distant screams as FÉLICITÉ strides towards the door and opens it.

Goodbye, Antoine.

The door closes behind her. Fire and screams.

DIDI (VO) **Don't judge her too harshly. We're all capable aren't we? Of letting a little darkness in?**

25.

Inside ANTOINE's cottage.

DIDI (VO) **And an hour later when Pascal and Clotilde come to collect their money, this is what they find.**

Door opening.

CLOTILDE Grandfather?

PASCAL Antoine!

CLOTILDE Eugh. I smell burning.

PASCAL Has he left something cooking?

They walk in.

I'll check the kitchen, you look out the back.

CLOTILDE Alright.

PASCAL (off) This is strange. There's nothing cooking at all. And the stove is cold –

Horrified screaming from CLOTILDE. Music.

Clotilde? Clotilde?

He runs from the kitchen into the  
main room to the garden door.

PASCAL Oh – my –

CLOTILDE (panicked, sickened, crying) It's horrible  
– oh God –

PASCAL Don't look, Clotilde, don't look.

CLOTILDE He's still burning...

PASCAL Please, Clotilde, come here. Come here.

He hugs her, she is still shaking.

DIDI (VO) **And as he holds this precious, wonderful  
woman to him his eyes alight on something.  
On a brass hook screwed into the wall, he  
sees hanging a scarf, a woman's scarf,  
swaying in the wind.**

CLOTILDE What is it?

PASCAL Nothing. It's nothing.

26.

PASCAL's study.

DIDI (VO) **But it's not nothing. Darkness is not  
nothing. Darkness is something and it is  
engulfing this house.**

DIDI Now do you believe me?

PASCAL It must be a coincidence.

DIDI Do you think it's a coincidence?

PASCAL I don't know.

DIDI You're scared, aren't you?

PASCAL No!

DIDI I can see it in your eyes.

PASCAL                   It wouldn't make sense for her to do something so... brutal.

DIDI                      Everything has to be rational, doesn't it?

PASCAL                   Well doesn't it?

DIDI                      We're nearly there. I have only a few stories left to tell you. Tonight and tomorrow. And then you can write and publish and then the truth will be out.

PASCAL                   The truth.

DIDI                      And Félicité can't hurt you.

DIDI (VO)                **So that evening I tell him about Renée and Maxime and their wicked desires and about Angelique and her devotion and Victor who roamed the sewers and Aristide and his bank but where before I saw his hunger for knowledge, I now see only distraction and fear.**

                            27.

Train station.

DIDI (VO)                **So, the next day, when a letter arrives from Maxime, begging Clotilde to come and tend to him, Pascal protests but soon gives in, relieved that his love will be far from Plassans and Félicité.**

PASCAL                   I'll send a message at the Post Office to let them know you're coming.

CLOTILDE                 And will you miss me?

PASCAL                   Of course!

CLOTILDE                 I'll miss you too.

Station manager shouts 'stand clear'.  
                            The train starts to move.

PASCAL                   You make sure he's not dying and then hurry back. I want you home in a week – promise me.

CLOTILDE                 I promise!

PASCAL (calling) Bring me back something from Paris!

CLOTILDE (disappearing) My love!

DIDI (VO) **And as Pascal wanders back home, he cannot shake a feeling of dread.**

In the distance, the far distance, a rumble of thunder.

28.

Steps up to the door of PASCAL's house.

DIDI (VO) **He's back home within an hour and the house looks reassuringly familiar and yet...**

PASCAL goes to put his key in the lock, sees the front door is ajar. He pushes the door; it creaks open a little.

PASCAL Hello?

DIDI (VO) **In the rush he must have not pulled the door to. He tells himself.**

He pushes the door fully open and steps in.

29.

Inside PASCAL's house.

PASCAL Didi?

He listens. Clock ticking. Distant thunder.

Hello?

He starts to go carefully up the stairs. Music.

Didi?

He reaches the top. He waits outside the door to the study then he lunges in.

30.

In the study. PASCAL and DIDI yell with surprise.

DIDI                   What the bloody hell do you think you're doing?

PASCAL                I thought – I thought something had happened...

DIDI                    I was asleep!

PASCAL                Hold on, grandma –

DIDI                    What's the matter –

PASCAL                Please pass me the pillbox from my desk.

DIDI                    (doing so) What's wrong with you?

PASCAL                (Taking the pill) That's better. Nothing. The front door was open, that's all.

DIDI                    Maybe you didn't lock it properly.

PASCAL                That must be it. I'm sorry.

DIDI (VO)             **It would be very unusual someone as fastidious as Pascal to forget to lock the door but he has been distracted. The same reason he didn't notice that the spare key was not hanging from its usual hook. Had he noticed, he would have assumed that Clotilde had taken it. But he would have been wrong.**

DIDI                    You have a message.

PASCAL                A message, from whom?

DIDI                    I didn't read it. It was slipped under the door.

PASCAL                Let me see. Oh it's just Mr Augère.

DIDI                    Who's that?



PASCAL           The village hypochondriac.

DIDI             What's he want?

PASCAL           He wants me to look in on him this evening. He has a stabbing pain in his side.

DIDI             Poor man.

PASCAL           It's always something.

DIDI             Aren't you going to go?

PASCAL           I want to hear more about the family. I want to hear how the story ends.

31.

A Paris street. Rain. The ringing of a bell and then the door opens.

FOOTMAN          Good evening?

CLOTILDE         I'm Clotilde Macquart. I've come to see Maxime Saccard.

FOOTMAN          (moment of awkwardness) Ah yes. We were expecting you. Won't you come in?

32.

The study. Distant rumbles of thunder.

DIDI             You think you're different from the rest of the family, but you're not.

PASCAL           How can you say that?

DIDI             How would you describe your brothers.

PASCAL           Greedy, driven, obsessive.

DIDI             Well?

PASCAL           I'm not like that.

DIDI             You can be greedy for the truth.

PASCAL           I'm not greedy for it, I just ... eager.

DIDI Prove it to me. Go to see your patient.

PASCAL (angrily) But I want to hear about Jean and the farm.

DIDI You see?

PASCAL Alright. Just to prove you wrong, I'll go.

DIDI Good boy.

PASCAL I promise you it'll be a wasted journey.

DIDI I'll see you soon.

He leaves the room. Footsteps on the stairs.

DIDI Oh and don't forget –

Front door closes downstairs.

Your umbrella...

Closer rumble of thunder.

33.

SACCARD residence. Marble entrance hall. Raining hard outside.

CLOTILDE I don't understand.

BUTLER We received a telegram about your arrival this afternoon but I'm afraid Mr Saccard has been in Italy, as is his custom, all winter.

CLOTILDE But I had a letter from him.

BUTLER May I?

CLOTILDE Of course.

BUTLER Alas, madam, that is neither his signature nor his writing.

CLOTILDE But –

BUTLER I'm afraid you appear to be the victim of a practical joke, madam.

CLOTILDE Why would anyone drag me all the way to Paris just for a joke? I don't understand.

Music.

34.

The study. The storm is now very close. Rain and thunder. The door opens downstairs. Footsteps on the stairs.

DIDI (calling) Did you forget your umbrella?

The door opens.

I knew you would -

Pause.

FÉLICITÉ Hello, Mummy.

DIDI How did you get in here?

FÉLICITÉ I've got a key.

DIDI You know Pascal will be here any minute.

FÉLICITÉ I watched him leave, five minutes ago. And I watched him all down the lane.

DIDI I see.

FÉLICITÉ You don't look pleased to see me.

DIDI I don't suppose I am.

FÉLICITÉ Oh why not? Aren't we all one big happy family? Well well, what have we here?

DIDI Put that down.

FÉLICITÉ I suppose this must be the famous book.

DIDI Leave that alone.

FÉLICITÉ 'Aristide Saccard, né Rougon, born 1815, became rich with a fraudulent scheme offering sub-prime mortgages before

founding the Universal Bank —' oh this really is the most perfect filth.

DIDI It's all true.

FÉLICITÉ There are many truths, Mummy. Some survive and some do not.

FÉLICITÉ lights a match.

DIDI What are you doing?

FÉLICITÉ It's a little chilly isn't it? I thought I'd light a fire.

She lights one of the precious papers.

DIDI Put that out! Put it out!

FÉLICITÉ I find fire rather cleansing, don't you? Now how does this work?

She pushes the burning paper into the stove. She adjusts the control to push more oxygen into it. The papers flare up. She adds some more papers.

These dry old papers go up like nobody's business, don't they?

DIDI You're a monster!

FÉLICITÉ I'm just protecting our interests. There's nothing I wouldn't do to protect my family. Now where are the rest of them?

With a yell, DIDI launches herself desperately from the chair at FÉLICITÉ. FÉLICITÉ is caught off-guard and off-balance and falls to the floor.

Get off me, you silly old cow!

DIDI Never!

Struggle.

FÉLICITÉ Don't — make — me — do — this!

DIDI is choking. FÉLICITÉ has her hands on her throat.

DIDI (choking) Fe – li – ci – té...

FÉLICITÉ Why don't you just die, you evil old witch?

Thunder. DIDI gurgles a final scream.

The front door has opened; there have been footsteps on the stairs and the door opens.

PASCAL Of course, wouldn't you know it? I only went and forgot my umbr –

Pause.

What – what's happening?

FÉLICITÉ Oh hello darling. Just warming the old place up.

PASCAL What? What?

FÉLICITÉ It's quite cosy when you get used to it.

PASCAL Grandma?

FÉLICITÉ Oh she'll be alright. Tough as old boots that one.

PASCAL My God, mother, what's going on?

FÉLICITÉ Pascal, darling, I'm doing what I've always done. I'm protecting the family.

PASCAL Are those – are those my notebooks?

FÉLICITÉ Darling, you must understand. The family will survive – even if it means making certain – sacrifices.

PASCAL You can't do this.

FÉLICITÉ I can't let you destroy the family. Your father and I are about to do great things.

PASCAL Is that really what all this – Grandguillot, Antoine, everything else – what all this has been about? Money?

FÉLICITÉ No need to pull that face when you say money, sweetie. Without money, what would we be? I'm sorry, darling, but this is for your own good.

She opens the stove.

PASCAL Please, mummy. Just listen to me.

FÉLICITÉ (hesitates) I'm listening.

PASCAL (desperate) We're all part of stories. We need to understand the stories we're part of. We need to tell those stories about who we are if we're going to face ourselves. If we can't tell our own stories, we can never change.

FÉLICITÉ Who needs change? I think we're fine as we are.

PASCAL Mother – our family story isn't just our story; you, father, Eugène, Aristide, Nana, Octave, Jean, Étienne, all the rest of them. They've changed France – they've become France. It's everyone's story now.

FÉLICITÉ I don't deny our family has had quite the impact, but let's skip the squalid details.

PASCAL (high passion) It's the truth! And the truth is SACRED! This is everything I've lived for – everything I've –

Pause.

FÉLICITÉ Pascal?

Guttural sounds, gasps. PASCAL is suffering a massive heart attack.

PASCAL Pass me – pass me –

FÉLICITÉ What's that?

PASCAL My pills – pass – me –

FÉLICITÉ I can't make out what you're saying.

She feeds more paper into the stove.

PASCAL                    Please -

He falls to his knees.

DIDI (VO)                **There is a darkness in this family's heart.**

PASCAL                    Please - please -

DIDI (VO)                **A shadow in the blood.**

PASCAL                    Mu - mummy -

DIDI (VO)                **A dark desire, deep in the muscles and blood, to protect the family at all costs.**

FÉLICITÉ                  I've told you, my boy.

DIDI (VO)                **Even if that means -**

FÉLICITÉ                  My darling son.

DIDI (VO)                **Sometimes the family must be destroyed.**

FÉLICITÉ                  There is nothing I won't do to protect my family.

PASCAL                    (guttural) Please - mummy -

DIDI (VO)                **The darkness within the dark, the night within the night, is to watch one's own child die.**

She feeds more paper into the stove.

FÉLICITÉ                  Ashes to ashes.

PASCAL collapses. The fire crackles. Thunder rolls. Build and then:

35.

The church of Saint-Saturnin. Solemn organ music playing. A small congregation. They are singing a hymn. We are in the pews.

FÉLICITÉ                  Psst. Clotilde!

CLOTILDE                 Yes, Felicite?

FÉLICITÉ                  Are you going to be alright?

CLOTILDE I – I think so.

DIDI (VO) **Clotilde has suspicions about Félicité's role in her lover's death, but no proof and, as Pascal would say, without proof we have only faith and faith is not science.**

CLOTILDE I should get ready.

FÉLICITÉ You'll be marvellous.

CLOTILDE Thank you.

She gets up and we follow her behind the pulpit. It's backstage so to speak. The singing is slightly distanced. She is alone. We hear her going over her eulogy.

CLOTILDE (muttering) Ladies, gentlemen, citizens, friends. No – MAYOR, ladies, gentlemen. Family and – family and –

Catch in the throat.

I don't know if I can do this.

PASCAL Of course you can.

CLOTILDE Pascal?

PASCAL Have I changed that much?

CLOTILDE laughs tearfully.

CLOTILDE Are you – are you a ghost?

PASCAL There's no such thing as ghosts.

CLOTILDE So how are you here?

PASCAL I'm not. You're imagining me. But it's a pretty good likeness, right?

CLOTILDE What are you – why am I imagining you now?

PASCAL Part of you doesn't think you can give this speech, but the other part asked me here to tell you you can.

CLOTILDE I don't think so.



PASCAL                   Of course you can. Because you are the most extraordinary, beautiful, brilliant girl in the whole world. And if the most extraordinary, beautiful, brilliant girl in the whole world can't give a funeral speech, who can?

CLOTILDE                I want to touch you.

PASCAL                   I know you do.

CLOTILDE                I want you to hold me, more than anything else in the world.

PASCAL                   I know, my love.

CLOTILDE                It makes no sense.

PASCAL                   Everything real is rational, everything rational is real.

CLOTILDE                Are you real?

PASCAL                   That's complicated.

The music is coming to an end.

You're up. Go and do it. Just say what you think.

The music ends. CLOTILDE steps up to the pulpit.

CLOTILDE                (clears her throat and then) Dear friends. My dear friends. We're here to say goodbye to Pascal Rougon. Pascal was the kindest, most generous, most infuriating man I've ever known.

Murmurs of agreement.

He devoted himself to medicine, to science, to the truth. All he ever wanted was to know and to speak the truth. He neglected everything in that cause: his friends, his health, his manners.

Murmured assent, maybe laughter too.

And it is in the spirit of Pascal's love for the truth that I need to tell you

this. Pascal and I were lovers and I am pregnant with his child.

Gasps.

He would have been sad we held this memorial in a church. Why devote yourself to an invisible, impossible God when we could devote ourselves to this world, this beautiful world?

More unrest.

But today isn't just about Pascal. We are also here to say a last farewell to Adelaide Fouque, Aunt Didi, the mother of us all, whose blood flows in all of our veins. She was an impossible, wicked, wise and wonderful woman. She spent her last weeks telling Pascal the story of our family, for a book he wanted to write. The notes for that book have been destroyed. But I read the stories and I remember them.

Unrest.

I thought of getting rid of this child. What would people say? But to hide the truth just because of what people would say, isn't that the worst blasphemy, Pascal? So I'm keeping it. And you liars and thieves, you with hate in your hearts and blood on your hands, I will tell your story.

Mic drop. Okay, not really mic drop. But an abrupt end to the speech. She leaves the pulpit and walks down the aisle past the stunned congregation.

FÉLICITÉ

(hissing, as she goes past) Clotilde? Come back here! Clotilde!

Church door slams shut. Organ falteringly recommences.

DIDI (VO)

**Yes. I died. Didn't I mention that? 104 years old. A little before my time, but then, I'd done what I needed to do. And I live on in my family: in their blood and their passions, their hopes and their**

deeds. I live on in all their voices. In Pascal and Clotilde's child, even. Some might say the bad old blood of the Rougons and the Macquarts still flows: when lovers risk everything for a touch, when men and women rise to power or fall from it, when bankers turn love into money, and leaders turn peace into war, and the vain and the shallow fill our minds with lies and our hearts with hate.

But I don't know about any of that. This is the story of my family. That's all.

END